

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 094648

NESCO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, UNESCO, XB, XF

SUBJECT:PROPOSED ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

1. DEPT WISHES TO EXPLORE IN EARNEST FEASIBILITY OF PRO-
VIDING APPROPRIATE ASSISTANCE TO EFFORTS GROWING OUT OF
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DECEMBER 1977 UNESCO CONFERENCE OF ASIAN NEWS AGENCIES
HELD IN COLOMBO, SRI LANKA. CONFERENCE RESOLUTION MANDATED
PRELIMINARY STEPS TOWARD FORMATION OF ASIAN NEWS NETWORK
AND REQUESTED SUPPORT FROM UNESCO AND DEVELOPED MEMBER
STATES IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

--CONDUCT AN INVENTORY OF TRAINING FACILITIES FOR NEWS

AGENCY JOURNALISTS IN ASIA;

--ORGANIZE REFRESHER COURSES AND WORKSHOPS IN ASIAN COMMUNICATION INSTITUTES OR NEWS AGENCIES;

--PROMOTE EXCHANGES OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS BETWEEN NEWS AGENCIES;

--IDENTIFY FUNDING SOURCES WHICH CAN OFFER TRAINING FACILITIES AND ASSISTANCE;

--SPONSOR A SURVEY OF THE TECHNICAL NEEDS OF NEWS AGENCIES.

2. DEPT'S INTEREST IN EXPLORING A POSSIBLE USG RESPONSE, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH UNESCO, STEMS FROM CERTAINTY THAT POTENTIALLY EXPLOSIVE MASS MEDIA ISSUES WILL AGAIN ARISE AT 20TH SESSION OF UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE (GC) IN PARIS, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1978. ABILITY OF U.S. AND ALLIES TO MANAGE CHALLENGE AND STEM THREATS TO PRINCIPLE OF GLOBAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DEPENDENT IN LARGE MEASURE

ON OUR ABILITIES TO MINIMIZE THIRD WORLD SUPPORT FOR MEASURES TENDING TO LEGITIMIZE CURBS ON INDEPENDENCE OF MASS MEDIA. LDC ADHERENCE TO SUCH MEASURES, DEPT BELIEVES, IS BASICALLY SYMBOLIC, AND OUTLET FOR FRUSTRATIONS DERIVING FROM THE GLOBAL IMBALANCE IN INFORMATION FLOWS AND CONFIDENTIAL

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PERCEIVED "INEQUITIES" IN ACCESS TO MEANS OF COMMUNICATION. IT IS THEREFORE IN U.S. INTEREST TO FOSTER MEASURES TO HELP LDC OVERCOME STATE OF COMMUNICATION UNDERDEVELOPMENT IN CONSTRUCTIVE WAYS, SO AS TO REDUCE PRESSURES FOR RESTRICTIVE "REMEDIES."

3. TUNISIAN RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT 19TH UNESCO GC (NAIROBI, 1976) MANDATED UNESCO AND MEMBER STATES' ASSISTANCE "IN SUPPORTING THE EFFORTS OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WHICH ARE SEEKING TO ESTABLISH AND STRENGTHEN THEIR OWN INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS IN LINE WITH THEIR NEEDS." USG, SEEKING TO SIGNAL ITS BACKING FOR COMMUNICATION DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO LDCS AS CONCOMITANT OF ITS VIGOROUS OPPOSITION TO A RESTRICTIVE DRAFT DECLARATION ON MASS MEDIA PRINCIPLES, GAVE STRONG SUPPORT TO TUNISIAN RESOLUTION. SUCH SUPPORT FROM U.S. AND OTHERS WAS SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN EROSION OF THIRD WORLD SUPPORT FOR DRAFT DECLARATION AND INSTRUMENTAL IN MANDATING ITS REVISION AND POSTPONEMENT UNTIL 20TH GC. AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF U.S. STRATEGY IN DEALING WITH THIS ISSUE IN 20TH GC IS ABILITY TO DEMONSTRATE GOOD FAITH IN SUPPORTING TUNISIAN RESOLUTION. EFFORTS IN THIS DIRECTION HAVE BEEN

HAMPERED BY: (A) APPARENT INABILITY OF LDC'S TO STATE THEIR COMMUNICATION NEEDS IN CONCRETE TERMS THAT COULD BE TRANSLATED INTO A SPECIFIC PROGRAM RESPONSE; AND (B) AN ADEQUATE RESPONSE TO MANY OF THESE NEEDS IS OUTSIDE THE SPENDING AUTHORITY OF USG PROGRAM AGENCIES.

4. ASIAN NEWS NETWORK CONCEPT, HOWEVER, HAZY AS IT IS, MAY HAVE POTENTIAL FOR SURMOUNTING THESE DIFFICULTIES:

--IT IS IDENTIFIED BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THEMSELVES AS A TOP PRIORITY;

--IN PRINCIPLE AT LEAST, EXISTING USG EXCHANGE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS MAY BE APPLIED TO RESPOND TO SOME
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OF THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS.

5. UNESCO HAS NO BUDGETED FUNDS FOR ON-GOING ASSISTANCE TO PROJECT BEYOND FINANCING TWO FOLLOWUP MEETINGS IN TEHRAN--ONE IN MARCH, THE SECOND APRIL 15-17. THESE ARE PLANNING SESSIONS FOR FIVE-MEMBER COMMITTEE NAMES AT COLOMBO CONFERENCE AND CHARGED WITH IMPLEMENTING RESOLUTION; CONSISTS OF FOLLOWING:

P.S. KASBEKAR, INDIA; MOHAMAD NAHAR, INDONESIA; YOURI LAOURI, IRAN; C.E.L. WICKREMASINGHE, SRI LANKA; AND LHAVAGJARVYN ZANTAV, MONGOLIA. FOR FUTURE ASSISTANCE, UNESCO HAS OPTIONS OF (A) ESTABLISHING EXTRA-BUDGETARY SPECIAL FUND TO RECEIVE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM MEMBER STATES OR (B) REQUESTING MEMBER STATES TO FUND SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF PROJECT DURING PREPARATORY PHASE. UPON RAISING POSSIBILITY OF U.S. ASSISTANCE WITH UNESCO OFFICIALS IN PARIS, U.S. PERMANENT DELEGATION WAS TOLD THAT NEWS NETWORK PLANNING GROUP MIGHT WELCOME SERVICES OF U.S. CONSULTANT WITH EXTENSIVE NEWS AGENCY MANAGEMENT EXPERIENCE. DEPT NOW WISHES TO TAKE LOW-KEY SOUNDINGS ON SUCH A POSSIBILITY AMONG APPROPRIATE PERSONS IN ADDRESSEE POSTS' HOST COUNTRIES. (FYI: DEPT HAS A CANDIDATE IN MIND FOR SUCH A TASK, UPI EDITOR-IN-CHIEF EMERITUS ROGER TATARIAN. END FYI.)

6. ACTION REQUESTED OF ADDRESSEE POSTS: DEPT AND ICA CONCUR THAT SYMPATHETIC INTEREST IN PROJECT SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO KEY INDIVIDUALS, ESPECIALLY THOSE NAMES IN PARA 5. EMBOFFS AND PAOS MAY DRAW UPON FOLLOWING AS TALKING POINTS:

--THE U.S. LOOKS WITH FAVOR UPON EFFORTS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES THEMSELVES IN ATTEMPTING TO EXPAND THEIR COMMUNICATION CAPACITIES AND REMEDY THE IMBALANCE IN
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INFORMATION FLOWS, SO LONG AS THE AIM IS TO INCREASE, RATHER THAN TO RESTRICT, THE FREE FLOW OF INFORMATION.
--USG WILL ENTERTAIN ANY PROPOSAL FOR A CONTRIBUTION TO THESE EFFORTS, EITHER DIRECTLY OR THROUGH A UNITED NATIONS SPECIALIZED AGENCY, WHENEVER LEGALLY POSSIBLE AND MUTUALLY AGREEABLE.

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE MULTINATIONAL WORLD PRESS FREEDOM COMMITTEE, STAND READY TO RESPOND TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE IN THESE EFFORTS.

--IN PARTICULAR, THE USG WOULD GIVE VERY ATTENTIVE CONSIDERATION TO A PROPOSAL--PERHAPS CHanneled THROUGH UNESCO--TO PROVIDE THE SERVICES OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL CONSULTANT WITH SUBSTANTIAL NEWS AGENCY EXPERIENCE.

--THE U.S. RESPECTS THE DETERMINATION OF NEWS NETWORK ORGANIZERS TO MAINTAIN STRICT INDEPENDENCE OF ORIENTATION AND HAS NO DESIRE TO INFLUENCE ITS POLITICAL, CULTURAL OR NEWS VALUES.

8. DEPT WOULD APPRECIATE THESE CONTACTS TO BE MADE, IF POSSIBLE, BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER SECOND TEHRAN MEETING (PARA 5). PLEASE ADDRESS REPORTS OF CONTACTS TO STATE (IO/UNESCO), INFO COPIES TO ICA AND OTHER ADDRESSEES, INCLUDING PARIS (UNESCO U.S. PERMDEL) AND USUN. CHRISTOPHER

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